

with complete and official returns.) Bob said we should have final returns in the next few minutes.

Five minutes later Herb Klein walked in and handed me the Connecticut returns.

Kennedy had carried the state by 90,000. We had thought he was ahead here, but the margin was somewhat larger than we had expected. On the plus side, the Republicans had picked up two House seats in Connecticut, breaking up a solid bloc of six Democrats.

By 5:30, the computing machines on both NBC and CBS television were making their predictions on the basis of early returns. Walter Cronkite of CBS reported: "Kennedy seems to be lengthening his lead." NBC's RCA computer showed the odds in favor of a Kennedy victory at 7 to 1, but it showed Nixon leading in states-ahead, 16 to 13.

At six—before the polls had closed in the West—CBS predicted a Kennedy victory with 52 per cent of the popular vote. Howard K. Smith commented: "We have established a trend and we now think we are close to being right." At this time only 8 per cent of the votes were recorded, with Kennedy leading in popular vote by 3 million to 2.75 million.

At 6:30, NBC's computer had lengthened the Kennedy odds to 15 to 1. As we had expected all along, Massachusetts had gone for him overwhelmingly.

First Ohio returns showed Nixon leading. But John Chancellor of NBC, reporting from the Midwest, said: "I think Ohio will come out for Kennedy."

At 6:45—still 15 minutes before poll-closing time in the West—Eric Sevareid of CBS reported: "We are pretty confident now of a Kennedy victory. All of the computing machines are now saying Kennedy." Len Hall, interviewed in Los Angeles, fired back: "I think we should put all of those electronic computers in the junk pile so far as election returns are concerned. This one is going down to the wire—a squeaker, a real close election."

At seven, we heard some good news. Kentucky, Vermont, and Oklahoma now joined Indiana in the Nixon column.

At 7:30, we began to get substantial returns from the big states with the big electoral votes, the states that would really decide the election. The states we were watching in this respect were New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Texas, and California. Of these seven states, we figured we would win if we carried three, but that Kennedy could not win unless he carried at least five.

We looked at the trends, state by state. We had very little from New York at that time but, with nearly 50 per cent of the vote in, Kennedy was leading in Pennsylvania by 300,000. In our analyses, we had figured on only a fighting chance in New York, a fair chance in Pennsylvania with the state leaning to Kennedy, a better than even chance in Ohio, a fair chance in Michigan but again leaning to Kennedy, an even chance in Illinois, and both Texas and California close but leaning to Nixon.

John Chancellor reported from the Midwest that Nixon had moved into the lead in that area generally but, with regard to Illinois, he said flatly: "It's a runaway; Kennedy's lead is insurmountable."

At 7:30, NBC reported the odds on a Kennedy victory at 250 to 1. Reports from New York were by no means yet conclusive but Kennedy had a substantial lead—in New York City—and we were not gaining as much upstate as we had hoped.

By eight o'clock (eleven, Eastern Time) we had thought everything would be over but the shouting. But eight came and went, only 20 million of an estimated probable final total of 70 million votes had been recorded—and the fight was far from over.

By this hour, Arizona, Florida, and Tennessee had fallen into the Nixon column. Kennedy had jumped to an early lead in California, based on scattered returns from primarily metropolitan areas. He had carried Missouri and Rhode Island—as expected. NBC's computer predicted a Kennedy electoral landslide, with a final count of 401 electoral votes (out of 537).

At 8:30 we took a close, hard look at the seven big decisive states. Only 40 per cent of New York State was in, but we felt Kennedy's lead there was more than we could overcome. Bob Finch called Tom Dewey and our feelings were confirmed. Kennedy's eventual margin in New York was to be 375,000 votes out of 7.3 million cast—a substantially better showing for us than the 800,000-vote Kennedy margin the usually reliable New York *Daily News* poll had indicated when we were in New York two-and-a-half weeks before election—but not enough.

There was also bad news from Pennsylvania: Kennedy's margin was now 115,000. Before giving up completely on that key state, however, we called Hugh Scott to get his appraisal. He had been confident that we would carry Pennsylvania, though by a close margin, because he believed we would come to the Philadelphia line with a lead of 200,000 votes. We had in fact reached that goal—but a Kennedy land-